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A LETTER FROM AN OLD FRIEND, TO THE *CONGREGATION* OF THE CHAPEL AT OLD DEER.

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GOOD PEOPLE,

You will, no doubt, be ſurpriſed at an Addreſs of this kind; but when you ſee the name at the end of it, I hope, whatever reception it may meet with, it will, at leaſt, appear excuſeable, as coming from an old man, who ſix and forty years ago, had ſomething of a *paſtoral charge* in the Epiſcopal Congregation of Old Deer:—a Congregation, which was then, as it ſtill is, a conſpicuous part of the Epiſcopal *profeſſion* in Scotland.—This charge was earneſtly recommended to me by their then worthy Paſtor, with whom I had the happineſs of living in ſtrict fraternal bonds of mutual friendſhip and intimacy for nine years: in conſequence of which, finding himſelf on the decline, he had often requeſted me, and the very night in which he died, preſſingly renewed the requeſt, that I would be as aſſiſtant as poſſible to his dear Flock, when he left them, and do all I could to preſerve them ſtedfaſt in the Communion of the Scotch Epiſcopal Church; to which, both from principle and family-connexion, he was zealouſly attached himſelf, and had been at great pains to train up his people in the ſame attachment. Accordingly, when he was taken from us, in hearty compliance with his dying requeſt, and at the particular deſire of our then Biſhop, who had their intereſt much at heart, and was anxious to get them provided with a Paſtor as ſoon as poſſible, I began, from the time of Mr. Livingſtone's death, which happened about the middle of December, 1751, to perform Divine Service every Sunday in the Congregation at Old Deer, and continued to do ſo for ſeveral months, in the confined way to which the people of our Communion were at that time unhappily reduced. There are, no doubt, *ſome* among you, *few* perhaps, but ſtill, I preſume, ſome, who will remember, (and to them I appeal) how ready I was, though many times with great inconvenience, from the attendance due to my own numerous and extenſive charge, to perform every occaſional office

office to which I was called, without reluctance or delay, through all that ſevere winter, and moſt of the enſuing ſummer.— Many were the weariſome journies in the worſt of weather, which I ſtruggled with in that ſervice, being then, I thank God, bleſt with a body that grudged no fatigue, and a ſpirit that feared no danger, eſpecially when engaged in what was *then* thought a good cauſe:— a cauſe which I had moſt ſincerely at heart, as well from motives of particular friendſhip, as from a ſenſe of general duty. You will judge, therefore, how much I was diſappointed, when towards the end of the year, after Mr. Livingſtone's death, ſome of his people began already to talk of deſerting the church, in which he had left them, and applications were making for that purpoſe, which rendered it neceſſary for me to offer my ſervices only to thoſe who ſeemed deſirous of them, and were ſtill willing to wait with patience, till they ſhould ſee, what their Biſhop could do for them. In this fluctuating and divided ſtate matters continued among them, to the ſad diſquiet of many a conſcientious member of the Congregation, till about Whitſunday 1753, when upon an information given againſt me, as a nonjuring Clergyman, to the Sheriff, (from what quarter it is needleſs now to inquire, and might be thought invidious to conjecture) I was carried to priſon, to the utter diſappointment of all my labours, to the juſt alarm of my neighbouring brethren, and at the viſible, perhaps, intended riſk of deſolating my own dear and now diſconſolate flock. This unexpected ſtroke, at ſuch a critical time, put an end almoſt to every difference of ſentiment in the neighbouring Congregation, and united the greater part of them, ſome from choice, and ſome from what they called neceſſity, in the reſolution of inviting an Engliſh-ordained Clergyman to come and ſettle among them: which ſettlement accordingly took place, before the ſix months of my legal confinement were elapſed, and I have ever ſince remained a quiet ſpectator of the unhappy effects produced by it. Being, however, wholly unprecedented, at leaſt in this retired corner

ner of our church, it was viewed for a while in ſo ſtrange a light, even by many of thoſe who had been the promoters of it, that it was thought neceſſary to ſay ſomething in vindication of it. It was therefore alledged, that there was really no ſort of difference between thoſe Engliſh-ordained Clergy and us, but in the bare article of praying for the king by *name*, which difference, you will obſerve, is now completely done away. Yea, it was farther urged, as the ſtrongeſt argument for our acquieſcing in theſe new ſettlements, that when candidly examined, they would be found *friendly* and *favourable*, ſerving as a ſort of protection to us, by intimidating our enemies, and ſhewing them the folly of haraſſing us any longer: for at that time *Preſbyterians* were conſidered as the only enemies of *Epiſcopacy*. This was, at leaſt, a plauſible pretext, and no doubt had its weight with many at the period I am looking back to. How far it has ſince been realized, it is ſurely from experience that we are beſt enabled to judge; and that experience has fully convinced us, that theſe ſettlements of Engliſh-ordained Clergy, inſtead of being *friendly* and *favourable*, have been moſt hurtful and prejudicial to the intereſts of Scotch Epiſcopacy, as could be ſhewn in a number of inſtances, wherein the oppoſition has been plainly avowed, and every method taken to prejudice the people, and keep them at a diſtance from our communion. In proof of this, I ſhall only beg leave to put you in mind of what was lately advanced at a general meeting of your congregation, held for the purpoſe of providing an aſſiſtant and ſucceſſor to your preſent Paſtor. On that occaſion, I am told from very good authority, that the Clergy of the Church to which I belong, under the old and odious title of *Nonjurors*, were publickly charged with teaching doctrines and adopting practices, of ſuch a dangerous or improper tendency, that it was thought neceſſary to warn you all, in a ſolemn manner, to beware of, and avoid them. Will any one ſay, that this was *friendly* and *favourable*, or meant as ſuch by the perſon who brought forward ſuch an invidious charge?

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In this ſhort addreſs to you, I do not think that I have any occaſion to vindicate either our principles or our practices: thank God, they are ſuch as have ſtood, and will ſtand the teſt of any inquiry that may be made into them, whether of a candid or cavilling nature. I only aſk, and beg of our accuſer to ſay, What difference there is between our principles and practices at preſent, and thoſe of the Epiſcopal Congregation of Old Deer at the time he entered among them, except it be in one article, with reſpect to which, he ſurely will not ſay, we have changed to the worſe? Till ſome ſuch material difference be pointed out, as gives ſufficient ground for the charge you have heard againſt us, however unkindly intended, you cannot in equity draw any other concluſion from it than this, that if it be not well-founded, it reflects upon the Author of it, and if it be juſt againſt us, it reflects at the ſame time upon the Perſon whom he ſucceeded, whoſe memory, to my certain knowledge, was long dear in your Congregation, and with ſuch of you as remember him, is not, I hope, even at this day, ſo contemptible as ſome people have been endeavouring to make it. In either of theſe views, therefore, let this ſilly cenſure operate, as far as it may; it can do us no harm, and I ſcorn to retort.

Another mark of *friendly* regard which we have of late years experienced from the ſame quarter, is an attempt to ſhew the nullity of *our* Epiſcopacy, founded upon the wild *Eraſtian* notion, that the Biſhops of Scotland who were ejected from their livings, in conſequence of the Revolution in 1688, "when they loſt their temporal juriſdiction, loſt their ſpiritual powers alſo:" an opinion ſo ridiculouſly abſurd, and inconſiſtent with all that we know of the original conſtitution of the Chriſtian Church, that I ſhould not have thought it worth my while to take notice of it, if you had not heard it accompanied with a pretended diſbelief of what was ſaid in favour of our Epiſcopacy, by no leſs a perſon than the preſent Biſhop of Rocheſter, when

when in the year 1792, that diſtinguiſhed Prelate ſtood up to plead our cauſe, in the great Council of the nation, with a ſtrength of argument and dignity of mind, which did him equal honour as a Chriſtian Biſhop, and a Britiſh Senator. To be ſure, his Lordſhip's ſpeech on that memorable occaſion, if acknowledged to be genuine, bears hard upon what he called the *crippled* Epiſcopacy, that would be upheld in Scotland by Paſtors of Engliſh ordination; and as you have been told, that the genuineneſs of it depends upon the veracity of a near friend of mine, whoſe character in that reſpect has never yet been called in queſtion, let thoſe who affect to doubt it make application to Biſhop Horſely himſelf, and I am willing to ſtake the whole diſpute between us, upon the iſſue of his anſwer. After all, I can hardly ſuppoſe, that the Speech is *really* diſbelieved: Only as it pinches ſo hard, it has been thought prudent, rather than find fault with it, to deny it altogether, and out of delicacy to an *Engliſh* Biſhop, to make free with a *Scotch* one. Yet we can produce from the pen of an Engliſh Divine, of no ſmall repute in his own Church, an equal, if not ſtronger teſtimony in our favour, from another diſtinguiſhed Prelate of the Church of England, the pious and venerable Dr Horne, late Biſhop of Norwich, of whom his Biographer records this anecdote, that, "from the preſent circumſtances of the "Scotch Epiſcopal Church, it's primitive orthodoxy, pie-"ty, poverty, and depreſſed ſtate, he had ſuch an opinion "of it, as to think, that if the great Apoſtle of the Gen-"tiles were upon earth, and it were put to his choice, "with what denomination of Chriſtians he would commu-"nicate, the preference would probably be given to "the Epiſcopalians of Scotland, as moſt like to the peo-"ple he had been uſed to."* After ſuch a ſtrong de-

* See the life of Dr Horne, by Mr Jones, (p. 151) who has mentioned ſeveral other inſtances of the kind attention paid by that worthy Biſhop to the intereſts of the Scotch Epiſcopal Church, of which he was pleaſed to entertain a very friendly and favourable opinion.

claration

claration in our favour, from one ſo well qualified to judge of what was, or was not, a valid Epiſcopacy, and a true Church, it might have been hoped, that nothing more was neceſſary, "to convince the gainſayers," and eſtabliſh this as a certain truth, acknowledged at leaſt by two of the brighteſt ornaments of the Engliſh Bench, that a ſucceſſion of Biſhops has been as duly and regularly preſerved in Scotland, as in England, or in any other Epiſcopal Church upon earth. The juſt and neceſſary conſequence of which is, that thoſe who profeſs to be of the Epiſcopal Communion in Scotland, if they would act conſiſtently with their profeſſion, ought to acknowledge and live in communion with, and receive the benefits of the Epiſcopal function from, the Biſhops of Scotland, unleſs it can be ſhewn, that the terms of communion preſcribed by theſe Biſhops are ſinful or contrary to the word of God. But this has never yet been ſhewn, though ſome attempts have been made that way, by thoſe who wiſh to keep up the preſent unhappy diviſion, and fruſtrate every hope of union among the Epiſcopalians in Scotland. With this view, our Scotch Communion Office has for ſome years been held out as the great bone of contention; and you have no doubt heard our Church ſtruck at with the old ruſty weapon of *Popery*, becauſe we uſe the primitive mixture in the ſacramental Cup, and in our prayer for the whole ſtate of *Chriſt's church*, conclude with a pious wiſh, "that at the day of the general reſurrection, we and all "they who are of the myſtical body of Chriſt, may be "ſet on his right hand, &c." Theſe two articles make up the whole of *our* Popery; and I cannot help thinking, that it is paying, what is *really* Popery, by far too great a compliment, to carry it up to the high pitch of venerable antiquity, which theſe obnoxious articles have to boaſt of. But not to enter on this vaſt field of controverſy, where we ſhould find many more ſound Divines, and able writers *for* us, than *againſt* us, I would only aſk, were the compilers of the firſt reformed Liturgy of England *popiſh?*

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Yet all that we obſerve was enjoined in that Liturgy, which contained petitions for the dead in much more expreſs terms, than any we have ever uſed. With reſpect to the ſaints departed (who are the only *dead*, to whom our prayers have any reference) it is our belief, that they are *not* as yet in heaven: the Church of Rome has declared from its infallible chair, that they *are*, and thoſe who find fault with our practice, muſt believe ſo too if they are conſiſtent. Are not they, therefore, who join *with* the Papiſts in belief, more Popiſh than we who differ *from* them in prayer? For the Saints whom they pray *to*, as already in heaven, we only pray *for* their happy admiſſion to that glorious place, which ſurely conſtitutes a very material difference, and is indeed the ſtrongeſt antidote that has been, or can be offered againſt the, perhaps, moſt dangerous corruption in all the ſyſtem of what is now called *Popery*.

You will obſerve, good people, that I have not begun this unpleaſant altercation. I have only ſtood upon the defence, which, by what I have repreſented to you of former times, it will appear, that I was, both from public character, and perſonal conſiderations, juſtly entitled to do. And now that I have been thus forced to take up the pen, before I lay it down, let me as a *friend*, at leaſt, thought ſo by your predeceſſors, be allowed to expoſtulate a little with you, on the nature, the truly pitiable nature of your preſent ſituation. You boaſt, I hope, of being an *Epiſcopal* Congregation, as *Epiſcopacy* has, at leaſt, an agreeable ſound with you. But it is merely the *ſound* you are pleaſed with; for you have nothing elſe, none of the eſſentials of, or comforts to be derived from, it. You cannot make yourſelves Epiſcopal, any more than you can make yourſelves Chriſtians. The privileges of both muſt come to you from another quarter, Chriſtian privileges from your relation to Chriſt, Epiſcopal privileges from your connexion with a Biſhop. Believing that there is a Chriſt, does not make a Chriſtian; believing

lieving that there are Biſhops, does not make a perſon Epiſcopal. I am addreſſing thoſe who are taught, that they are *made* members of Chriſt, (that is, Chriſtians) in and by baptiſm, and the parallel I am ſtating, is fully applicable to ſuch. Aſk a member of the Eſtabliſhment, what it is that conſtitutes a Preſbyterian Congregation, and he will tell you, their being connected with, and ſubject to, the particular Preſbytery to which they belong. Aſk one of our Church, what it is that conſtitutes an Epiſcopal Congregation, he will tell you, their being connected with, and ſubject to, the particular Biſhop, to whom they belong. Let a queſtion of the ſame kind be put to any of you, what have you to anſwer? What conſiſtent account can you give of the religious perſuaſion, by which you wiſh to be diſtinguiſhed? No Biſhop has appeared among you, in the regular diſcharge of his official duty, for forty years and upwards: and is not this ſtrange and without example in a Congregation, calling itſelf *Epiſcopal?* If all you have in view, be only to diſtinguiſh yourſelves from the *national* Eſtabliſhment, there are other denominations in our country, ſuch as Seceders, Methodiſts, Bereans, Independents, ſome of which I would recommend as more proper for you to aſſume, that you may no longer abuſe the name of *Epiſcopal*, which, however fond you may be of it, cannot with any propriety be applied to your ſituation, nor will you find it an eaſy matter, notwithſtanding your long poſſeſſion, to make good your claim to it. For if there be in the Eccleſiaſtical records ſuch a thing as the *Catholic* Church: if there be ſuch a thing to be met with as *National* Churches, with regular ſucceſſion and power of diſcipline within themſelves, independent of, but connected in bonds of Chriſtian Faith and Communion with one another, and thereby forming the great aggregate body of the Catholic church, then I ſay, and I am warranted by the eſtabliſhed doctrine of the church of England to ſay, that unleſs you can exhibit ſomething more than

than your aſſumed, and diſputable denomination of *Epiſcopal*, to prove that you belong to ſome national church, you have no title to be, or be reckoned, a part of what ſcripture and antiquity hold to be the Church Catholic. A real and true Epiſcopal Church, under its own Biſhops, was once the national Church of Scotland, and at that time, ſuch ſettlements as theſe of yours, if attempted, would have been deemed ſchiſmatical, and ſtigmatiſed as ſuch. An alteration of the Eſtabliſhment took place in conſequence of the Revolution; but when the ſubſequent union incorporated the two kingdoms of Scotland and England into one ſtate, no ſuch thing was propoſed as an incorporation of the two churches, and to this day we ſpeak of them as diſtinct and ſeparate bodies, and though we ſay, the Britiſh *ſtate*, we always ſay, the Britiſh *churches*, even with different views in ſo ſaying. I would therefore, aſk, To what national Church do you belong? To the preſent Scotch Epiſcopal Church, which has all the marks of apoſtolic doctrine and fellowſhip that the three firſt centuries would have required in a national church, ſuch Congregations as yours are acting in direct oppoſition: and as for the church of England, of which they are taught to conſider themſelves as a part, whatever ſentiments, for political reaſons, ſhe might once have entertained or profeſſed towards them, as leading them to imagine, that they belonged to that church, ſhe has now *virtually* diſclaimed all ſuch, in as far as ſhe has, in a ſolemn and public manner, acknowledged the validity and regularity of our Epiſcopacy, and therefore cannot be ſuppoſed ſo inconſiſtent as to make ſuch a friendly acknowledgement *of* us, and at the ſame time patronize and ſupport an avowed and *now* groundleſs ſeparation *from* us. But the whole of this diſpute between you and us, I might have reſted on an argument, which ſome of you will perhaps remember, was made uſe of, when your preſent ſettlement was in agitation, by a perſon who at that time was equally hoſtile both to you

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and us, that "Epiſcopacy was either a good or a bad "thing: if it was a good thing, we had it in Scotland, "if it was a bad thing, we need not ſeek it from Eng-"land." This ſtate of the argument is in the ſtrict mode of logical reaſoning, and bating the prejudice attached to the author, is as unanſwerable as it is plain.

I have ſtill, however, ſomething to ſay on the nature of your preſent eccleſiaſtical Conſtitution, in which I think, you can hardly fail to agree with me, becauſe whatever you may wiſh to be ſaid in favour of it, you muſt allow, that at beſt it is lame and defective in ſome matters of no ſmall importance, which have always been conſidered as annexed to, and inſeparable from, Epiſcopacy in it's full extent. I might put you in mind of one particular, which has been always thought, not only of great conſideration, but even *eſſential* to every ſociety under the denomination of a regular church, and that is, what you are taught to pray for, "the Unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace." There are two eminent writers, in the large catalogue of ancients, who handle this ſubject, and whom the chriſtian church has always looked back to with juſt veneration, Ignatius Biſhop of Antioch, and Cyprian Biſhop of Carthage: and it is well known how fully they explain, how warmly they enforce, as the principal ſcope of all their writings, this *Unity*, and peremptorily fix it to one point, not to the vague ſound of Epiſcopacy in general, or to *a* Biſhop or Biſhops at random, but to *one*, to *the* Biſhop, the particular Biſhop of a certain diſtrict or dioceſe, who in virtue of this inherent prerogative of his office, was, in theſe early days, believed to be the principle or centre of unity to the *portio gregis*, the portion of the great flock, committed to his care, and the ſole intermediate bond of connexion between them, and the Biſhop of Souls, the glorious *head* of the whole body.—Perhaps many of you are ſtrangers to theſe two old venerable martyrs: but every *true* ſon of the church of England, is, or ought to be acquainted with them; and

to all ſuch I appeal, whether the doctrine of theſe primitive fathers be not, as I have ſtated it, and conſequently how far your preſent ſituation can, or will upon compariſon, be found to agree with their deſcription of a Chriſtian congregation. Here, therefore, if primitive example be of any weight among you, there is a manifeſt defect, and ſuch as would have been ſadly felt and deeply regretted by every Epiſcopal congregation of thoſe times, if ſuch congregations could poſſibly have exiſted under it. But this is not all: for as one misfortune commonly brings on another, the defect I have now mentioned has produced, what is equally dangerous and unprimitive, the want of church diſcipline, or of the exerciſe of that power which is lodged in *the* Biſhop, of reſtraining and puniſhing abuſes of any kind, in either clergy or laity, by St. Paul's ſpiritual rod of eccleſiaſtical cenſures. You have read, that the angels of the ſeven churches in Aſia, who, I hope, you are taught to believe, were the ſeveral Biſhops of theſe ſeveral churches, were by high authority either reproved or commended for their reſpective behaviour in inſpecting and governing, every one the *particular* church committed to him.—— May I not, therefore, aſk, where, or who is the Biſhop, that deſerves either reproof or commendation for his particular inſpection of your congregation, or for the exerciſe of Epiſcopal authority in any ſuch as yours, unleſs you will ſay, what the faults and frailties of human nature, and even experience itſelf, will not permit to be ſaid, that neither clergy nor laity ever ſtand in need of any ſuch reſtraint among you. But theſe two wants, of eccleſiaſtical unity and diſcipline, however grievous in themſelves, yet being not ſo immediately viſible in their effects, which are moſtly of an inward quality, may not perhaps, impreſs you all ſo deeply as they ought: I ſhall, therefore, take the liberty of mentioning ſomething of this kind more outward and viſible, which you all muſt acknowledge, and many of you, I know, do lament, I mean,

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the want of the ſacred ordinance of confirmation, a want, which thoſe I am addreſſing have been lying under, for full *forty* years, the ſpace of time that God was grieved with his people in the wilderneſs. I am not at preſent called upon to prove the great benefit of this venerable inſtitution, nor how neceſſary the due celebration of it has been ever eſteemed in the church of England, and among all who profeſs to be of the Epiſcopal perſuaſion, as ſurely no attempt will be made by any ſuch, to bring into contempt what has ſo much antiquity on it's ſide, and been ſo long conſidered as one of the great advantages of Apoſtolic Epiſcopacy. Yet this ſo ancient, ſo ſalutary, and by all true members of the church of England ſo much deſired, bleſſing, you have had no ſhare in, nor can expect to have any, while you continue in your preſent ſituation: which, I think, amounts almoſt to a demonſtration of what I have been putting you in mind of, that you belong to no Biſhop, and no Biſhop belongs to you, as I have ground to believe there never was a congregation that had a Biſhop, and wanted confirmation ſo long as you have done. You will be inclined, no doubt to ſay, that you are ſenſible of this want, but cannot help it; and I am entitled to ſay in return, that *now* at leaſt you *can* help it: for whatever impediments from our ſide might have formerly lain in your way, as I am willing to make all the allowances for you that I can, theſe are at laſt happily removed, and no bar now appears, either civil or eccleſiaſtical, againſt your enjoying all the benefits of a regular Epiſcopacy which a ſtate of toleration can admit of, and which is all that we or you either have to expect. All this you know, and I could explain further, if delicacy of connexion would allow me.—There is, it ſeems, a providential door opened among you, for a trial, at leaſt, of having your congregational wants *regularly* ſupplied: and if this door be neglected by you, or ſhut againſt you, by thoſe who are endeavouring to miſlead you, where, in the ſight of God, muſt the blame lie? It

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has been urged, I hear, againſt ſuch a trial, that it would be a forſaking the communion into which moſt of you have been baptiſed, and I acknowledge the force of this plea, as there are few can urge it with a better grace than I can do. From your preſent Paſtor too, I own it might come properly enough, if it were not encumbered with ſome difficulties that need to be explained. For in the firſt place, I would be glad to know, what is that communion, upon the premiſes I have laid down, into which he has baptiſed you? Why, you will ſay, it is the Communion of the Church of England. But how can that be, when your Paſtor himſelf is not within the pale, nor under the juriſdiction of that church, and you, as his congregation, have no other relation to it, than what ariſes from the accidental circumſtance of uſing it's liturgy? A circumſtance which may occaſionally take place in any congregation of Diſſenters, whether in Scotland or England, and therefore can be no true mark of church communion in either country. But ſuppoſing that your Paſtor had really baptiſed a conſiderable number of his preſent congregation into the communion of the church of England, yet a ſecond queſtion ſtill remains to be anſwered, What was the communion into which the people among whom he entered, had been baptiſed? Was not that undiſputably the communion of the Epiſcopal church of Scotland? And if ſo, where would be the harm or impropriety of bringing back his preſent flock to the communion in which he found his original one, and all of them fully ſatisfied with it, if they could have got it retained? Perhaps it will be ſaid, that now, after ſuch a length of time, it would not be *convenient*, on many accounts, to be attempting ſuch a change. But convenience is one thing, and conſcience another. When both theſe can be gratified, it is well, but when that cannot be done, ſurely, I need not ſay, to what ſide the preference is due. In the choice of religious principles, no man who thinks as he ought on ſuch a ſerious ſubject, will allow him-

himſelf to be ſwayed by motives of worldly intereſt or convenience.—— But if I could poſſibly ſuppoſe, that you would ſuffer matters of ſo ſmall conſideration to have any weight in the great buſineſs of your ſalvation, it would give me pleaſure to aſſure you, as I can do, from the very beſt authority, that in the communion of the church to which I would willingly recal you, none of you run the ſmalleſt riſk of hurting your temporal intereſt: for as the law now ſtands, perſons of every rank or ſtation are at full liberty to join in its public worſhip, and may ſafely attend divine ſervice in any Epiſcopal chapel of the Scotch church, where the King and Royal Family are prayed for by name, as the law directs. Accordingly theſe chapels are now attended by Peers of the realm, by Lieutenants, and Deputy Lieutenants in the ſeveral counties, by Officers of every rank in the army, and civil Magiſtrates in town and country; all theſe being perfectly ſenſible, that his Majeſty has no better ſubjects, nor perſons more attached to his government on principles of permanent loyalty, than the Biſhops and Clergy of the Scotch Epiſcopal Church. What then ſhould now hinder you from returning to the communion of that church, in which, it is certain, your worldly intereſts can ſuffer no injury, and your ſpiritual concerns will be attended to, with that decent order and regularity, in which the God of Peace delights, and which the bleſſed Son of his love has eſtabliſhed in his church, as the means of preſerving its members in the unity of the ſpirit, and in the bond of peace. By expoſtulating with you in this manner, I ſhall perhaps incur the charge of interfering in other people's matters, and ſowing diviſion among neighbours. My interference has been already accounted for, and ſhewn to ariſe from the well known principle of ſelf-defence, and a natural deſire to ſay ſomething in vindication of thoſe, with whom I am officially and cloſely connected. And as for ſowing diviſion, though I might plead the example which was ſet me, at the time, when

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your preſent ſettlement commenced, and when, to my certain knowledge, every method was taken to ſow diviſion, in order to get that meaſure accompliſhed, yet as I did not approve of it *then*, I have no deſire to make it my defence *now*, but ſhall plainly and honeſtly acknowledge, that if to warn people of what I think their danger, and in the bowels of chriſtian charity and friendſhip to point out to them, what appears to me the only way to avoid it, be conſidered as ſowing diviſion, I am guilty, and muſt anſwer for it at another bar, where, I pray God, that no heavier charge may be produced againſt me. I have no intereſt in your reſolutions in any way whatſoever; and as at my time of life, within two or three years of *eighty*, I have nothing to hope from the applauſe, or to fear from the cenſure of the world, I value not the contempt of any, who can ſneer, but cannot anſwer. Happy indeed ſhould I be, if it ſhould pleaſe that Almighty Grace, "which alone worketh great marvels," to proſper my weak, but well intended, endeavours, for bringing about an union ſo much deſired, with perfect harmony among, and ſatisfaction to, *all* concerned: In which caſe, though from the prevailing humour of the times, I am not ſo ſanguine as expect it, I would, God willing, make a puſh, old and infirm as I am, to appear once more, as an aſſiſting brother in the Chapel of Old Deer, as I had frequently done *fifty* years ago, with great pleaſure to myſelf, and, as the taſte then went, with ſome degree of approbation from others.

But, good people, I have done, and ſhall leave what I have written to it's fate: ſubſcribing myſelf in the mean time, from love and regard to the memory of your predeceſſors, and as our good old Scotch phraſe runs—

FOR AULD LANG SYNE,

Your friend and well-wiſher,

LINSHART, Feb. 1, 1798. JOHN SKINNER.

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